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ABSTRACT

A roundtable session at the 1992 Conference on College Composition and Communication explored the effects of portfolio evaluation on composition students, English faculty, and departmental administrators at two- and four-year campuses of the University of Alaska Southeast. Faculty from both four-year and two-year campuses found that portfolio evaluation encouraged their students to revise more often and more extensively. From an administrative standpoint, portfolio assessment has had a beneficial effect on the curriculum and on faculty relations. Eight handouts provide: (1) a detailed description of the procedures for the assessment of students' portfolios by the English faculty at midterm and at the end of the course; (2) a portfolio scoring guide; (3) questions for in-class writing during one particular week of the semester; (4) a juror's rating sheet; (5) the midterm portfolio evaluation form; (6) a writing tutor review sheet and referral form; and student comments about the portfolio assessment process on (7) the Juneau campus and (8) the Ketchikan campus of the University of Alaska Southeast. (RS)

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Uniting Two-Year and Four-Year College Programs through Portfolio Assessment

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Uniting Two- and Four-Year College Programs through Portfolio Assessment

This Roundtable Session at the 1992 Conference on College Composition and Communication explored the effects of portfolio evaluation on composition students, English faculty, and departmental administrators at two- and four-year campuses of the University of Alaska Southeast. Portfolio evaluation was used first for all Basic Writing sections at the four-year campus in Juneau; now the program has been extended to Basic Writing sections at the isolated two-year campuses of Ketchikan and Sitka, which each have a sole faculty member in English. This regional assessment, spanning diverse geographical and student communities, has raised new challenges in academic articulation and consistency of standards.

Presenters gave a brief overview of the structure and procedures of this departmental evaluation. Our system calls for an assessment jury in which writing instructors rate students other than their own on a collection of essays turned in at mid-term and end of the semester. Attached handouts include a description for students of this assessment system, a sample writing assignment for the in-class portion of the portfolio, and rating sheets used by portfolio judges. Since support from a writing center is essential for such a system to succeed, writing center referral forms and tutor sign-off sheets are also included. The final handouts list comments from Basic Writers whose portfolios were evaluated, some from students at the four-year campus and others from students at the two-year campus at Ketchikan.

Faculty from both four-year and two-year campuses found that portfolio evaluation encouraged their students to revise more often and more extensively, thus resulting in higher quality student work. While this regional assessment approach promotes transferability of course work, it may also require two-year college students to meet higher performance standards than they expected. This led to more anxiety about the portfolio process among students at the two-year campus. Despite these students' concerns, however, their performance levels were equivalent to the four-year students'.

From an administrative standpoint, portfolio assessment has had a beneficial effect on the curriculum and on faculty relations. By setting standards jointly for students at all regional campuses, faculty have reached consensus about what constitutes adequate levels of writing achievement in different English courses. The portfolio readings also have proved to be an effective way of including part-time and remote site faculty into departmental decision making and a collegial environment, as well as serving as a valuable method for training new composition faculty.

NOTICE OF WRITING ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENT
For All Students Enrolled in English 110/Basic Writing--Spring 1992

Assessment of Your Writing Portfolio by the English Faculty At Midterm and at the End of the Course

During the seventh and fourteenth weeks of this semester, your English 110 instructor will collect your essays and put them in a manila folder, which we will call your writing portfolio. At these times, your instructor will forward your portfolio to a panel of English faculty members who will assess the progress you have made in the course and, at the end of the term, determine whether you are ready to take English 111.

The portfolio you submit will contain an in-class essay as well as your revised out-of-class papers. At the end of the semester, if the faculty panel decides that both your in-class essay and your out-of-class papers are adequate, then your instructor is free to assign you whatever grade you have earned for the course. Note well: In order to take English 111, you must pass English 110 with a grade of "C" or better. However, if the faculty panel decides that **either** your in-class essay **or** your out-of-class papers (or both) are inadequate, then you cannot receive a grade of "C" or better in English 110 and therefore must repeat the course.

End-of-semester review (fourteenth week) and course grading

At the end of the fourteenth week (May 1), a panel of English faculty will read and evaluate your papers for their effectiveness. If the panel finds that your papers meet the standards outlined in this memo, your portfolio will receive a grade of "pass." A "pass" means your instructor is free to award whatever grade you have earned for the course, from an "A" to an "F." However, if your portfolio does not pass, then your instructor is limited to assigning a final grade of "D" or "F." **Be aware that having a final passing portfolio does not guarantee you a "C" or above in this course. When computing your final grade, your instructor takes into consideration additional factors such as your attendance, contribution to the class, and other writing assignments.**

Midterm review (seventh week)

In order to give you a chance to find out exactly what the portfolio panel members will be looking for in your writing at the end of the semester, they will read the writing in your portfolio at the end of the seventh week (March 6) and determine if it is adequate. If it isn't, then you will receive specific feedback from the panel to help you put together a passing portfolio for the end-of-semester review.

You must submit your portfolio to your instructor **at midterm** as well as at the end of the course **if you are to pass English 110 with a "C" or better.** Late portfolios cannot be accepted; the portfolio panel meets only twice a semester.

Formal paper requirements

- You will need a minimum of 1,500 typed words in your portfolio by the end of the seventh week and at least 3,000 by the end of the fifteenth week.

- You must include in your end-of-course portfolio **one paper with all previous drafts attached to it along with all of your instructor's comments.** You may use any paper that you have written after the midterm evaluation to satisfy this requirement. Your drafts should be stapled together in chronological order with the earliest draft on the bottom of the stack and the most recent draft on the top. You must remove your name from all of your drafts as well as from your instructor's comments before you place this paper in your portfolio. Save all of your drafts and instructor's comments.

- Each essay in your portfolio must include the date of the latest draft that you are submitting, not the date of your essay's first draft.

- In your **end-of-semester** portfolio, you must include at least one example of each of the essay types below. (Your instructor will make the appropriate writing assignments.) You will label each of your essays according to its type. (See the model essays at the end of this handout.)

  √ **a personal experience/descriptive essay**

  Generally, a personal experience/descriptive essay tells a story and makes a point about it, either directly or indirectly. For example, in such an essay, you might relate and describe something that has happened to you or to someone else. Your writing should use sensory description to make it possible for your readers to see and feel what took place. Your task as a writer is not only to describe the event so readers can experience it through their imaginations, but also to convey the event's significance primarily through showing rather than telling. A sample descriptive paper is included in this handout.

√ **an expository essay**

An expository essay "exposes" readers to new information. For example, you might write a summary of an article of real interest to you. Or you might explain a concept from your psychology class, or perhaps you might do some reading and research on a topic you wish to know more about and then share what you have learned. Your essay, though, must not sound as if you copied it out of the encyclopedia; nothing is more boring than that. You should do more than just present information to your readers; you must **interpret and evaluate it**: that is, you must tell your readers the significance of this information. A sample expository paper is included in this handout.

√ **an argumentative or persuasive essay**

This type of essay requires that you take an issue--perhaps one such as abortion--which has two or more sides to it and try to persuade readers to see, and perhaps adopt, your side of the case. You must show that you have understood and acknowledged the views of the opposition. A sample persuasive paper is included in this handout.

Labeling your essays

If, say, an essay's **dominant purpose** is to persuade you to adopt the writer's view on abortion, then the essay would be labeled "Persuasive." However, the other two major types of writing could also be present in that essay--personal/descriptive and expository writing. For example, in the abortion paper, the author might use descriptive writing to give you a vivid and personal example that would help stimulate your interest in the topic. The author might also use expository writing to "expose" you to new information such as what happened at the last Right to Life or Pro Choice convention. But, in the final analysis, the author would label this essay "Persuasive" because the paper's **dominant purpose** is to persuade you to adopt a specific view on abortion.

NOTE: It may be that in some cases you will have to "double label" an essay, as, for example, an essay that seems to be equally descriptive and expository. If your instructor agrees, you would label this essay "descriptive/expository." (It is not likely, however, that you will have to do this often.)

Timed in-class essays

During the seventh and fourteenth weeks, you will write an in-class essay of about 350-500 words, which you will include in your portfolio. We ask that you to write these in-class pieces so we can be sure you are able to write a basic essay as well as punctuate, polish, and proofread it without benefit of an

editor. Yes, every writer can use an editor, but we need to certify that you can write a standard, straightforward essay by yourself and edit it for punctuation and grammar.

You will have **two** class periods of one hour and ten minutes each to write the midterm and final in-class essays. You may bring a dictionary and a grammar/punctuation/usage handbook to your classroom, **but you may not bring any other materials whatsoever.** (Your instructor will provide the paper.)

To help you prepare to write this exam, your instructor will give you a list of topics to choose from well in advance. You should use this lead time to brainstorm and plan out your essay so you won't have any unpleasant surprises when you begin to write. You will use the first period for initial drafting. Afterwards, your instructor will collect your essay and hold it for you until the beginning of the next session, at which time you will revise your essay, copy it over (if necessary), and proofread it carefully before turning it in. Your instructor will add the essay to your portfolio before forwarding it to the faculty panel.

How much weight will be given to the timed in-class essay at semester's end?

In order for your portfolio to pass, your timed in-class essay (as well as your formal typed papers) **must be acceptable to the English 110 portfolio panel.** This essay must be "readable": your organization and ideas must be clear and your sentences easy to digest. Your punctuation, grammar, and spelling must meet college-level standards. If your in-class essay is clearly unacceptable, your portfolio will fail.

Why does the in-class essay count so heavily?

The in-class essay is a "check" against your out-of-class essays: it reveals whether you are are able to produce good, clean, readable prose by yourself rather than rely heavily upon instructors and peers to be your editors. Although every writer can use an editor, your goal is to learn to be your own best editor, and your in-class writing will give the faculty panel a good idea of how competent a self-editor you are becoming.

What are the standards for a passing portfolio?

What follows are the qualities of writing that portfolio readers will be looking for. These qualities are taken from Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff's student guidelines for a similar writing assessment project at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

"**Involvement.** [Portfolio readers] seek writing where you care enough about yourself, your subject, and your readers to come up with something important to you--instead of just going through the motions or avoiding mistakes. A portfolio will benefit far more from pieces where you attempt something difficult, interesting, worth trying--or in some way stretch yourself even if you don't quite pull it off--than from pieces that are boring to read because you played it safe.

"**Clarity and voice.** Language so natural and alive that a reader hears your voice on paper. Your writing should sound good when read out loud. (You don't have to use slang or colloquial language in order to sound lively and natural.)

"**Good thinking.** Interesting thoughts: what helps most here is lots of exploratory writing and talking. Careful thinking: what helps most here is critical revising with full concentration; look for the objections that someone would make if she disagreed with you. Good thinking probably has more influence on portfolio readers than any other quality.

"**Effective structure.** Your piece must somehow hang together and lead readers through it so they don't get lost. This doesn't mean there is some ideal or required organization for good essays, for example a single right form for introductions or conclusions. It's just that the **beginning** of any piece of writing must **work** as a way to get readers started. In essays, the safest and most common way to get readers started is to begin with a quick overview so readers know where you are taking them and don't get lost if they run into something unclear. But that's not the only good way to start. Good essays can start with an odd detail or example or anecdote--so that for a moment the reader doesn't even know what your paper is going to be about. But that's slightly riskier; you've got to make it work; you've got to make readers eventually say, 'Ah yes, now I see that it made sense for the writer to throw me off balance at the start.'

"Similarly, the **ending** of any piece of writing has to work as a way to finish, conclude, close, or say goodbye. The traditional and trustworthy method is to find a single concluding statement for the ending that pulls everything together--a conclusion that all the rest of your essay has been leading up to. This permits readers to grasp all at once--at the end--everything you've been saying throughout the whole essay. But there are other ways to conclude an essay successfully, for instance with an example or quotation which summarizes what you are saying. You can even end by bringing up an new issue that **follows** from what you're saying and so represents the 'next step' in your enterprise--and thus end with a new beginning. But one way or another, you must end by giving readers a sense of closure, unity, and a sense that you have achieved something."

- - Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff, State University of New York at Stony Brook

In addition, the portfolio panel expects that the papers you present will be "readable"--i.e., papers which have been rewritten to a level of quality that allows English 110 faculty members to **read them through the first time without stumbling.** To quote Elbow and Belanoff again, "Portfolios will fail if [papers] contain more than a few mistakes in grammar, punctuation, spelling, or typing. They will also fail if they have more than a few sentences that are so tangled that the meaning is unclear to a general reader on first reading." Members of the UAS English faculty can expect a high level of correctness in your writing because you have the opportunity to rewrite the papers that go into your portfolio before you submit it to the English 110 panel. Furthermore, outside help is available through the Learning Center.

Where can I go for additional help with my writing?

Your English 110 instructor is your primary coach for helping you to prepare your portfolio. But if you want or need extra help, the UAS Learning Center on the first floor of the Egan Library is a major resource. Telephone: 789-4482.

What kind of feedback will I get from the panel of faculty readers?

Because faculty readers have to go through so many portfolios in such a short time, they cannot give you as much feedback on your writing as you would like. They will not comment on individual essays; this type of detailed feedback you will get from your instructor. However, the panel's checklist will give you a useful indication of how you are doing. Included in this handout are copies of two documents that faculty readers work with.

1) a scoring guide that readers use to evaluate the quality of both your in-class essay and your out-of-class papers;

2) the rating sheet that reader fill out.

What is the evaluation process that my portfolio will go through?

A practice evaluation session is held to ensure that all faculty use the same standards when judging portfolios. After this practice session, two faculty members read and evaluate each portfolio independently. (Neither reader sees the other's rating.) If the two readers basically agree on their ratings of

a portfolio, then the group leader averages the scores and fills out a summary sheet reporting the results. However, if two readers should disagree substantially in their evaluation of a portfolio, then the group leader assigns a third and sometime a fourth reader to evaluate the writing. The leader then carefully reviews the results and makes the final evaluation.

Portfolio checklist for your formal papers

1. You need a minimum of 1500 typed words by the end of the seventh week and at least 3,000 by the end of the fifteenth week.

2. When typing your papers, you must use Modern Language Association format, which is one of the standard academic and professional formats in use today. All of the attached sample papers are in MLA format.

3. With one exception (see item 4), you must submit clean copies of your papers--typed or word-processed copies with no marking either by you or your instructor.

4. In your end-of-course portfolio, you must include one paper written after the midterm portfolio evaluation that has all previous drafts and your instructor's comments. You must black out, cover up, or replace your name wherever it occurs in any of this material (including your instructor's comments). The portfolio evaluation process requires complete **student** anonymity. Your drafts should be stapled together in chronological order with the earliest draft on the bottom of the stack and the most recent draft on the top.

5. Each essay in your portfolio must include the date of the latest draft that you are submitting, not the date when you began your first draft.

6. You must include in your portfolio at least one example of each of the following essay types:

   √ a personal experience/descriptive essay
   √ an expository essay
   √ an argumentative or persuasive essay

7. In the top upper right hand corner, identify each essay as to its type. (See the attached sample essays for the heading format.) Obviously, your portfolio will not be limited to just these three essays but will include other papers that your instructor assigns.

8. DO NOT PUT either your name or your instructor's name on any of your papers, with the exception of the paper described in item 4. Instead, use only your social security number to identify yourself. (See the sample essays that follow for the heading format.) Do not include your class's section number.

9. The portfolios that you submit for the panel's evaluation must not include work that your instructor has not seen before. **If your instructor discovers in your portfolio an essay that he or she has not previously evaluated, the essay will be removed before your portfolio is forwarded to the panel.**

English 110 Portfolio Scoring Guide

Level	Description of Level
6	**HIGH PASS.** The portfolio is **superior**--i.e., excellent in overall quality. Papers are consistently outstanding, well organized, and essentially free of major grammatical and punctuation errors. Level-6 papers are more substantial than those of level 5 in that they are longer and better developed; their quality is exceptional for English 110.
5	**PASS.** The portfolio is **strong**--i.e., good in overall quality. Papers, for the most part, are engaging, satisfactorily organized, and generally free of major errors in grammar and punctuation but are not as original or as well developed as those in a level-6 portfolio.
4	**PASS.** The portfolio is **competent**--i.e., average in overall quality. Treatment of subjects is adequate, but not as strong as in level-5 work. Papers are organized reasonably well enough so that readers stay in control and don't lose their grasp of the main ideas. Level-4 papers may be less specific in their illustrations and may contain some unsupported generalizations. Furthermore, these papers are not as mechanically correct or as stylistically mature as those in a level-5 portfolio; however, they are still adequate for English 110 in that they reveal the student to be in reasonable control of punctuation, grammar, and usage.
3	**LOW PASS** (midterm only). **NO PASS** (end of term). The portfolio is **weak**--i.e., below average in overall quality. The weaknesses in (a) punctuation and grammar and/or (b) organization and subject development are considerably more distracting than those found in a level-4 portfolio. Substantial weakness in either area is enough to classify a student's folder as a level-3 portfolio.
2	**NO PASS.** The portfolio is **inadequate**--i.e., poor in overall quality. Papers exhibit serious weaknesses in organization, development of subject matter, and punctuation and grammar.
1	**INCOMPLETE PORTFOLIO.** The portfolio does not meet the minimum requirements for English 110 (e.g., not enough words, no in-class writing, etc.). Papers included may not show evidence of any serious effort by the student to produce an adequate portfolio. However, if they do, readers should note on their rating sheets the quality of the work produced.

English 110 Questions
For In-class Writing during the Week of March 2, 1992

INSTRUCTIONS:

a. You will have two class sessions of one hour and ten minutes each to write an in-class essay on **one** of the following questions.
b. You are welcome to think about and plan out your essay in advance, but you **may not** bring any handwritten materials whatsoever to class to help you with this essay, nor may you bring any printed materials except for a dictionary, thesaurus, speller, and English handbook.
c. We suggest that your essay be roughly between 350 and 500 words. Remember that the **quality** of your work is more important than the quantity of it.
d. You must write in the blue books(s) provided by your instructor. You should write on both sides of the page. Your essay may be either single- or double-spaced.
e. LEAVE ADEQUATE TIME FOR EDITING AND PROOFREADING. **DO NOT FAIL TO DO THIS!**
f. Put the number of the question you choose on the front of your blue book.
g. Record your social security number on the front of your blue book.

QUESTIONS:

1. With all of the media attention that has been given to the former Soviet Union, and with all the talk about the new-found freedoms of the "Russian" people, write an essay dealing with one or more of the following questions: discuss what the term "freedom" means to you. What does it mean to be free? How does one go about protecting one's freedoms? What does one owe in the way of responsibilities where freedom is concerned?

2. James A. Blaisdail, the first president of the Claremont Colleges, once said, "The center of a college is in great conversation, and out of the talk of college life springs everything else." If you live in student housing, or if you spend a fair amount of time talking with professors and other students (perhaps in the cafeteria, in study groups at the Learning Center, or in your classes), then discuss what it is that you have gained from all of this talking and listening. How has this interaction with others

affected or changed you significantly? In other words, how has your college experience enriched you or broadened your perspective of the world?

3. In his book Walden (1854), Henry David Thoreau wrote,

> It is never too late to give up our prejudices. No way of thinking or doing, however ancient, can be trusted without proof. What everybody echoes or in silence passes by as true today may turn out to be falsehood tomorrow, mere smoke of opinion, which some had trusted for a clouds that would sprinkle fertilizing rain on their fields. What old people say you cannot do, you try and find that you can. . . . It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves. . . . How worn and dusty, then, must be the highways of the world, how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity.

As Thoreau says, tradition and conformity exercise a powerful hold on most of us. Have you had cause to question a tradition of your family, social group, church, or society--or perhaps question an important opinion that either a friend or one of these others groups has held?

4. Our doubts are traitors
And make us lose the good we oft might win
By fearing to attempt.

- - Shakespeare

Have your doubts ever kept you from attempting something important to you--perhaps meeting someone or tackling a challenging goal (starting college) or an intimidating task (giving a speech)? Were you able to overcome your doubts? Were you able to grow as a result of taking up the challenge? Discuss what you learned about yourself as a result of finding (or not finding) the courage to attempt the task or goal, and make clear to your readers the significance of your decision.

English 110 Midterm Assessment/Juror's Rating Sheet

Student's SSN: _____ (last four digits) Juror: _____

OUT-OF-CLASS ESSAYS

Score _____

COMMENTS:

The best features of your out-of-class writing:

Problems that need attention:

___ no clear focus/main point/thesis

___ development of ideas or experiences lacking

___ organization/structure/paragraphing problems

___ wording and sentence structure problems

___ punctuation: too many mistakes

___ spelling and proofreading: too many mistakes

___ incomplete portfolio (not enough writing)

___ other:

HANDOUT D2

BLUEBOOK:

Score _____

Problems that need attention:

____ no clear focus/main point/thesis.

____ development of ideas or experiences lacking.

____ organization/structure/paragraphing problems.

____ wording and sentence structure problems.

____ punctuation: too many mistakes.

____ spelling and proofreading: too many mistakes.

____ other:

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

English 110 Midterm Portfolio Evaluation

STUDENT NUMBER: _____

AVERAGE SCORE ON OUT-OF-CLASS ESSAYS:

___ **HIGH PASS.** Your out-of-class essays passed with distinction. Congratulations on writing essays of such high quality!

___ **PASS.** Congratulations. Your out-of-class essays have passed. With a passing bluebook and continued hard work, you can expect to be successful on the final portfolio.

___ **LOW PASS.** Your out-of-class essays passed marginally this time, but there will be no "low pass" category during the final portfolio reading session. Had this been the end of the semester, your portfolio would have failed. If you work very hard, use the Learning Center, and have regular conferences with your instructor, you have a good chance of passing the final portfolio.

___ **NO PASS.** We are sorry, but your out-of-class essays did not pass. Some specific reasons why are listed on the enclosed jurors' rating sheets.

AVERAGE SCORE ON IN-CLASS ESSAY:

___ **HIGH PASS.** Your bluebook passed with distinction. Congratulations on writing an in-class essay of such high quality!

___ **PASS.** Congratulations. Your bluebook has passed. With passing out-of-class essays and continued hard work, you can expect to be successful on the final portfolio.

___ **LOW PASS.** Your bluebook passed only marginally. There will be no "low pass" category during the final portfolio reading session. Had this been the end of the semester, your portfolio would have failed. If you work very hard, use the Learning Center, and have regular conferences with your instructor, you have a good chance of passing the final portfolio evaluation.

___ **NO PASS.** We are sorry, but your bluebook did not pass. Some specific reasons why are listed on the enclosed jurors' rating sheets.

NOTE: Students must earn a score of **4.0 or higher on both parts of the portfolio** (out-of-class essays and the in-class essay) in order to pass the English 110 final portfolio and receive a passing grade in the course.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

THE LEARNING CENTER
ENGLISH 110 ESSAY
TUTOR REVIEW

Before you may turn in an essay for a third time (to improve your grade and/or prepare for the jury assessment), you must have a TLC tutor look at your essay with you. Because TLC tutors are not simply proofreaders and editors, don't expect your tutor to go through your writing line-by-line with you; however, tutors will give you feedback about specific questions you may have as well as point out problem patterns (comma usage, lack of transitions, etc.) that are evident in your writing. When you come for your 30 minute appointment (approx.), bring 2-3 specific questions you have about your essay (for example, "Is my thesis broad enough to cover all of my examples and details?" "Does my conclusion tie everything together?" "Will you look at my comma usage in such-and-such a sentence?")

Write your questions on this sheet, so you have them handy for your appointment:

1._____

2._____

3._____

Don't forget to have your tutor sign and date this sheet for you. This sheet **must** be attached to your essay in order for me to accept it.

Deadline Date for Tutor Review: _____

TUTOR SIGNATURE _____

DATE: _____

TUTOR COMMENTS:

HANDOUT F2

LEARNING CENTER REFERRAL FORM

Student's Name:_____ Date:_____

Course: _____ Instructor:_____

REQUIRES ASSISTANCE IN THE FOLLOWING:

Needs Placement Testing? Yes _____ No _____ MATH ENGLISH ?

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

_____ No clear focus/main point/thesis

_____ Organization/structure/paragraph problems

_____ Development of ideas or experiences lacking

_____ Wording and sentence structure problems

_____ Punctuation: too many mistakes

_____ Spelling and Proofreading: too many mistakes

_____ Term Paper Help

_____ Research Paper Techniques and Help (Documentation--MLA/APA)

_____ Other _____

STUDY SKILLS

_____ Textbook Reading

_____ Test-Taking Strategies

_____ Listening/Notetaking

_____ Reviewing/Preparing for Classes

_____ Other _____

Instructor's Additional Comments:

Student Comments about the UAS Portfolio Assessment process...

FROM FOUR-YEAR CAMPUS (JUNEAU)

I think that the jury assessment process is an effective way to grade our writing assignments. It provides for different views on the same material, thus providing a more true judgement. I feel that in writing everyone has a different opinion of what "good writing" is and that it would be unfair to judge a paper with only one opinion. The only part of the jury assessment that I would like to see improved is the amount of feedback. I would like to know more of "why" each person felt as he/she did. I would also like the paper to be edited so that I could learn what mistakes I had made.

As a low passer by the analysis of the jury, it kind of makes me want to work harder. Although I am happy to have passed, I know which article I wrote that brought me down. I plan to work harder and bring up my grade on the writing assignment. The jury process really doesn't bother me. My only problem was having my papers completely typed in time to hand in. I think it's good for us to become better writers. The only students it should bother is the students that are trying to coast through your English class.

I feel that the assessment process could be improved. There were several instances where the errors noted on my paper were judgmental calls and not concrete English rules. There should be some standards, but I still feel there is room for revisions.

I believe that the assessment process at UAS is an interesting approach to grading. Throughout the years, I have had one teacher give me a grade. This process is a good one; it allows a variety of people to read and grade your work...you also don't have to worry about the teacher knowing you and knowing how you write already.

Writing assessment is a great thing. It prepares and helps me for the future, and I know I need to know how to write. It is also instrumental in preparing me for the education program. My only concern is that two weeks ago a professor told me I didn't know how to write well and if that is so, then why did I pass midterm assessment? It makes me think that maybe the assessment should have been a little tougher.

I feel that the assessment is a good practice run for your term papers. This gives the student an idea about what to expect from a broad range of teachers. For me, it makes me work harder to try to adapt to different styles...the assessment is good for teachers as well as the students; the feedback about their students might show them areas that need more work, like grammar, punctuation, etc.

Student comments...

I don't think having to go through assessment is very important. It just gives the instructors more to do. I think that our grade should be given out by the instructor who is teaching us. Why? Well, she knows how we write, she can tell whether or not we've been in class learning, and she can tell by our quizzes where we stand, whereas the jury has no idea how hard we've been working to get our papers where they are. They may give you a lower grade than what you deserve.

I feel that the assessment process is a good idea overall...I was stressed out even at midterm, but it was worth it. I think it has helped me to know how well I am doing in English. This process gives me the boost of confidence that I need to keep going and try to get better. In the long run, I will know that I can write well and, therefore, I can concentrate and push myself.

The process of the portfolio idea is less biased. This way you don't know who will be grading your work. It saves the teacher's "ass" from being accused of having pets or giving good grades because the teacher likes a certain student.

I think there's got to be a better way. If people aren't learning what they should, there's obviously a problem. A good teacher should be able to recognize an incompetent student without a portfolio. The student should be flunked--hold back the ones with a problem and leave the other ones in peace.

I hate being rushed with my writing. I felt really rushed into having to put it together for the portfolio; I barely found time to put my writing assignments together. I would have loved to put in my other writings, but I'm a busy person; I have other classes and I work. Plus, I like to work on one paper at a time. We were always working on one paper while we were supposed to be revising the others. Maybe it's just me, but I felt rushed.

I hated the writing sample. I felt really pressured. It was very stressful and negative. I think it even made me feel like a lousy writer...but all in all, I think it is a good idea.

Getting everything revised for my portfolio was very hectic. I spent hours and hours typing on the computer or just thinking of a more effective way to write my essays. But once I actually finished my work and put my papers into my portfolio, I felt a sense of accomplishment...I had done my best to do a good job.

Student Comments on the Portfolio Process (from Two-Year Campus)
1992 Spring Semester

I am relieved to have passed at midterm and I liked the extra feedback I got on my papers. I would like to have seen more comments. I think one benefit of the program is that the process unifies writing skills.

How does it feel to go through assessment? At first I was worried about my writing ability. Later I felt confident that my instructor would give me the necessary tools to pass. I was also curious about how I would compare with other students in the region. I would have liked more information on why the panel graded the way they did.

I feel that participating in assessment is stressful. I feel like a bug under a microscope. Students are pressured, and if they don't succeed they might feel that they have failed the teacher and vice versa. I think that students who dropped the course, did so because of assessment.

I think that I tried harder because of the assessment process. I not only wanted to do well for myself but also for my instructor and the Ketchikan campus. I do think, however, that some of the pressure involved blocked my creativity and my writing ability.

I think that the assessment process places unnecessary stress on the student. The student is writing while constantly thinking about the panel that will judge his work. I think, though, that there are some benefits. Knowing that I did well with two other impartial judges makes me feel that I really did well as a whole.

I like the idea of portfolio assessment. It has expanded my ability as a writer. From the beginning of the semester, I was excited about participating. With the work I've put into it and the guidance of my instructor throughout the process, I have seen my writing improve.

The assessment program has benefits as well as drawbacks. I feel that I worry more about passing the class but I appreciate the chance to see where I stand on a regional scale.

The assessment has given me a goal--to learn different types of writing and be good at them. The feedback I've received has let me know where my strong points are and also where I need to improve. I feel that the body of my writing is becoming more solid and my focus has improved.